

THE QUIVER

Saturday, May 15, 1869.



"You are tired, Margaret."—p. 500.

UNDER FOOT.

BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF "MAGGIE LYNNE," ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.—BROOMBANK.

BROOMBANK, the home of Daniel Crawton, was a large square pile of stone, built on the best site which the neighbourhood could furnish for a house of its pretensions. It boasted a fine sweep of park-land, an imposing frontage, and a display of massive masonry, which took from the lightness of effect, but gave an air of solidity and substance suggestive of endurance and strength. There was a touch of

originality about the building, and an occasional departure from architectural rules, as though the architect had designed to make experiments of some favourite idea, or studied to please individual taste. This was the truth; for Daniel Cawton, the owner of the house, had himself superintended its erection and drawn out the plans. The interior corresponded with the rest; there was the same massive character about the rich furniture, and the stately rooms had an air of stern realism, as if nothing light or superficial could be tolerated there. One looked in vain, among the solid facts of mahogany and rose-wood, for the pretty toy-like ornaments and elegant trifles which are usually conspicuous in the make-up of modern drawing-rooms. Above all, the house wanted the supervision of a loving woman's hand. Those indefinable softening touches which are the signs of her influence, and attest in so many nameless ways that presence which lights up the atmosphere of home, as sunbeams brighten a landscape. Who shall say that this was not often realised by the successful man of money when he sat in barren state, with the grave butler at his elbow, and the costly show of plate on his table?—that there were not times when a keen perception of his loss was borne to him like the memory of a dead perfume wafted from the past, which had buried the only bit of youthful romance which his life had ever known?—times when he looked longingly back across the bleak, rugged mountain-path which he had climbed, resolutely setting his face against the domestic blessings which most men covet as the reward of their labours. It was, perhaps, his own bachelor experience that influenced him to decide in favour of his nephew's marriage.

"Broombank will want a mistress, Mark, therefore I wish you to marry early, presuming, of course, that you choose wisely. Many dire mistakes are made in that way, and much ruin follows; so I forewarn you, be cautious."

To which Mark, with his humble, smiling manner and the peculiar oily roll of his voice, replied, "I may say that I have already chosen, uncle, subject, of course, to your approval, as it only remains for you to decide upon the wisdom of my selection."

"Oh, indeed! then you have anticipated me. That is what I call taking time by the forelock. Pray who is the young lady?"

"Your ward, Miss Rivers."

The merchant looked at him gravely, and reflectively rubbed one of his grey whiskers, slowly repeating, "My ward."

"Yes, uncle. Do you see any objection?"

"None; on the contrary, I am pleased. But are you sure of your chance of success? May Rivers is a strange, wilful girl; do you think she likes you, Mark?"

The young man smiled, and glanced complacently at the reflection of himself in an opposite mirror,

saying, in an insinuating tone, that would have been highly exasperating to young May, "If she does not, she can be won; that is not an insurmountable difficulty. But I cannot well discuss my own claims; enough for me that you have given your consent for me to try to win her."

"Very good, Mark; but remember, I give you that consent subject to the same obligations which I should impose on any other suitor. The care of May Rivers was a death-bed trust, which will not cease with the legal termination of my guardianship. Her father's will elected me to fill his place, so I shall hold it my duty to watch over her interests even when she is nominally beyond my control. Understand me, Mark, your choice pleases me, and you have my full consent to try and win the girl if you can. Be sure that you love her as a true man should love the woman he marries."

With all his control over himself, Mark Danson winced at the words; for the thought of Giles Royton's daughter gloomed over him like a sudden cloud, and he turned sick with dismay as his mind shadowed out the possible result of an exposure of his villany. Anything but that—safety must be bought at any cost. It was beggary, disgrace; or Broombank wealth and social position. These were the alternatives that lay before him.

This conversation between the uncle and nephew took place over the breakfast-table at Broombank, on the morning of the day that May Rivers and her Aunt Lydia were expected as guests at dinner. To the young man's great relief, his uncle was too much occupied to notice anything unusual in his manner.

"Mark," he continued, gravely, "you wonder to hear the cynical old man talking in this strain, but about these things I speak as I feel, strongly. Boy, I would rather follow young May Rivers to her grave, than have her wedded to one who would turn traitor to his vows, and make her life a martyrdom, as so many women's are."

His grey eyes flashed as he spoke, and there was lion-like fierceness in his look and tone. In his heart, Mark quailed before him, but he managed to throw a sense of injury into his words as he said, "Do you doubt me, uncle?"

"No, Mark; my treatment of you should suffice for an answer. But there are times when I remember that you are a Danson, and your father's son."

He broke off abruptly, and pushing the chair from him, began pacing the room with heavy tread. The mention of Mark's father had brought back a painful story of humiliation and disgrace. There had been a crushed, broken-spirited wife, and a heartless, dissipated husband squandering her substance, then deserting her and his child, stealing away, none knew whither, to spend the rest of his disreputable life. Mark knew all, and often brooded over it with bitterness, for it was a wound to his pride. For

many years nothing had been heard of his father, whom all believed to be dead.

"That I am a Danson, sir, may be my misfortune," said Mark, "but not my fault. I am not to be held accountable for my father's sins."

The merchant stopped short in his walk, as he replied, "You are right, Mark, that would not be just; yet I recollect that, with even less reason, you were ready to distrust Hugh Crawton for his father's sake; but now dismiss this vexed subject. Ring the bell, and order the carriage round. It is time we left Mrs. Crane to her own resources for the rest of the day."

Mrs. Crane was a cousin of Daniel Crawton's, a mild-looking, elderly lady, who seldom raised her voice above a certain level, and whose law of life had been always "peace at any cost." The widow of a clergyman with slender means, she had been glad to accept the offer of a home at Broombank, where she became the head of domestic affairs, discharging all the duties of a housekeeper, though such was not exactly her position, as the master always took especial care to have her recognised as a member of the family.

The presence of Mrs. Crane was a great boon to Aunt Lydia, when she went with her niece to pay one of their state visits: it was a relief to the monotony of the day. After a solemn talk with May's guardian, whom she held in profound awe, or an equally solemn game at chess, which always put her into a state of nervousness, she enjoyed nothing so much as a confidential gossip with Mrs. Crane, when they compared notes of their experience in the mysteries of pickles and preserves, or sounded a chord of mutual lament over the degeneracy of the times.

* * * * *

Tea had been removed, and the drawing-room at Broombank had put on a look of unwonted cheerfulness, in honour, perhaps, of May Rivers and her bright eyes. The elders had settled down to their familiar relaxations; the party, as usual, consisting of Mrs. Crane, Aunt Lydia, and Daniel Crawton, with his old friend Dr. Grimes, a retired physician who lived in the neighbourhood, and often dropped in to spend his evenings. Left to her own resources for entertainment, May sat listlessly turning over the pages of a heavy folio of music, which she irreverently styled as "venerable as the hills." She was looking very pretty and attractive in her handsome dress of blue silk and black lace, with the band of pearls in her hair. Aunt Lydia loved to see her darling elaborately dressed; and if her advice had been accepted, she would have indulged her passion for display far beyond May's simple tastes. There was a rich glow on the girl's cheek, and an animated sparkle in her eyes, though she was only prattling small-talk with Mark Danson, who stood beside her chair. Acting on the morn-

ing's conversation with his uncle, he had assiduously tried to improve the occasion by devoting himself to the young heiress, though at the same time cautious not to risk offending her by undue assumption or too pointed attentions.

"If the weather was more propitious to my wishes," he said, smiling, "I should be tempted to whisper, 'Come into the garden,' May. That suits the invitation quite as well as 'Maude,' and, in my opinion, is a much prettier name."

May replied, saucily, "The question of names is so purely a matter of taste, Mr. Danson, that it seems to me scarcely worth discussion; but, so far as I am concerned, I decidedly prefer being addressed as Miss Rivers, for I never encourage my acquaintances to call me May."

Mark, inwardly chafed at her manner, bit his lip, as he said: "I ventured to count myself something more than a mere acquaintance. I am sorry to find I have been in error."

"So am I, Mr. Danson. Such discoveries are not pleasant to make about ourselves; but your error is really so trifling, that it is repaired simply by its acknowledgment."

Mark bowed. "Yet I cannot help protesting against your hard prohibition, Miss Rivers. May I hope that it will soon be revoked in my favour?"

"Hope nothing concerning me, if you are wise, Mr. Danson."

"But, at least, there is no reason why we should not be friends," persisted Mark, determined, if possible, to gain his point.

May replied, with provoking coolness, "Certainly, there is no reason, except that I have peculiar ideas about friendship, which would be likely to clash with yours. Will you oblige me by standing a little further away? you obstruct the light, and I wish to study the progress of the game from the faces of the players." She continued: "I should feel it rather formidable to sit down to a game of chess with Mr. Crawton, for I don't think it is in him to trifle about anything. Well, I like people to be thoroughly in earnest about what they do, whether it be work or play. Excuse me, Mr. Danson, I am not unreasonable enough to expect you to waste your conversational powers upon me any longer this evening, for I confess that I have not been a very attentive listener; but you must put it down to my want of good taste."

"I shall do nothing so uncivil, Miss Rivers; and however I may regret, I must be satisfied with what pleases you."

A dull heat burned in Mark's colourless face, and his eyes contracted under their falling lids, as they had often a trick of doing. But May did not then understand his peculiarities. She heard only his courteous answer; and it seemed so much better than she deserved, that she felt ashamed of her own brusqueness. She would have changed her opinion,

if she had heard his confidential whisper to himself that night, as he paced the terrace walk, smoking his cigar and cooling his hot forehead in the wind: "I will win her, if it is only to humble her. Then, my proud lady, we will be quits for all these insults. They shall be paid back with compound interest, for I am always punctual in the discharge of such debts."

CHAPTER XVIII.

FEELING HIS WAY.

HUGH CRAWTON'S introduction into the office of his uncle did nothing to remove the estrangement between the brothers, contrary, perhaps, to his mother's expectation, and the disappointment of some hope which she had allowed herself to cherish in secret; but she buried it softly without a murmur of complaint. The daily discipline of her life had been submission and patience.

"It must be for the best, dear," she said, cheerfully, to her daughter. "Since this which I desire so much is withheld, it is for some wise and merciful purpose that is not for me to see; we must learn to trust where we cannot trace His hand."

The mother and daughter were sitting at work in the early hours of the spring afternoon, stitching, as Chriss grumblingly remarked, like a pair of white slaves. One broad bar of sunshine fell between them, catching some glossy ripples of the young girl's hair, and shimmering over her homely stuff dress in warm gleams of gold. The window was open, letting in the soft spring air laden with scent of hawthorn blossoms, and bringing whispers of sweet bird music and the fresh May bloom and beauty that was helping to make the world so fair.

Margaret lifted her head and looked out into the dull, paved street with a regretful feeling that found expression in a little sigh of weariness when she dropped her eyelids, and fixed her attention again upon her work. Mrs. Crawton's gentle face caught the shadow as it passed, and her wistful eyes grew troubled as she watched the young face. She said, softly, "You are tired, Margaret."

The girl replied, hastily, "It is nothing to talk about, mother, only I was what Chriss calls giving way, for I seemed to smell the hawthorn, and was seized with an absurd longing to be out in the fields, weaving myself a crown of white blossoms, or wading through a field of buttercups—both very undignified proceedings for a person of my years. But don't mind me, mother, I have returned to common sense, and made up my mind to get this wristband stitched and set on before the end of the half hour."

At that moment Chriss made her appearance with a letter, which she carried distrustfully between her finger and thumb, evidently regarding it with suspicion. She had not forgotten the memorable visit of the sheriff's officers, and lived in daily fear of a repetition, looking upon letters as possible omens

of evil, for she knew the family were still immersed in difficulties, and at the mercy of sundry creditors. Though the sums owing were comparatively small, they represented a hopeless mountain of debt to poor Chriss. Her rugged face was not wearing its most agreeable look that day. It might be noticed that her temper fluctuated with the state of the family exchequer, for she became more irascible and cross-grained in proportion as the household funds ran low, and she found it more difficult to carry out the various little stratagems which she employed to soften the hard facts of poverty to her beloved mistress. She jerked the letter forward with a discontented sniff that concealed keen anxiety, for she contrived to pass behind Margaret's chair, and whispered, gruffly, "Mind, Miss Margaret, if it's bad news you are to let me know it; I won't be kept out of my share if there's trouble coming."

Mrs. Crawton divined the meaning of the movement, and looked up from the letter she was reading, smiling, to put at rest the fears of her old servant. "Make your mind easy, Chriss, it is nothing, except, perhaps, a little vexation for you, for Hugh has written to warn us that he will bring home with him this evening his cousin, Mr. Danson. I should have preferred this visit to have been delayed for a few weeks, but we must make the best of it now."

This intimation was sufficient for Chriss. Here was an unexpected contingency that would require all her energies, and her active mind was already busy with ways and means, scheming how to supply certain deficiencies in the provision department. For she reflected there would be tea and supper to prepare for the visitor, who was one of master's rich relations; that was a double reason why the dignity of the family should be kept up.

"I'll do my best, if I have to live on dry bread and weak tea for a month; that fine young master shan't have the chance of thinking we're too poor to give him a meal."

Here Chriss went back to her kitchen with a flushed face, the excitement of preparation already upon her. Margaret paused in her work, saying, thoughtfully, "So at last he is coming here, this Cousin Mark, who is to be Uncle Daniel's heir. Mother, from the first week that Hugh entered his situation, I have had a strong wish to see Mark Danson; and sometimes I have wondered if he will have power to influence Hugh's future, and whether it will be for good or ill. He is very friendly now, but I cannot tell if Hugh thoroughly likes him."

"I never heard Hugh say anything to his cousin's disparagement," replied Mrs. Crawton, quietly folding her son's note.

"Neither have I, mother; but you must remember that Hugh is not a talker, and does not discuss his friends. Cousin Mark's character will be quite safe in his hands; but I confess that I am far from being so charitable."

How little did Margaret Crawton guess that some of her words would be sadly prophetic to her brother, and that the time would come when she would remember them in anguish of spirit. At that moment the attention of mother and daughter was arrested by a sound from the sofa. It was Mr. Crawton's pleasure to apprise them that he had just awoke from his afternoon sleep. Unsuspected by them, he had seen the entrance of Chriss with the letter, and overheard most of the low-voiced talk that followed.

Ever thoughtful of his feelings, and anxious to spare his morbid susceptibility any real or fancied wound, Mrs. Crawton hastily left her work and went to him with Hugh's note in her hand. She was met by the usual querulous spirit of complaint.

"My dear, what was all that whispering about Hugh and Mark Danson? I only caught some of the words. It seems that I am always to receive my information at second hand," he added, jealously.

"We did not know you were awake, Robert. There is nothing to tell, except that Hugh has written to inform us that Mark Danson is coming home with him this evening."

The invalid's face flushed, and there was a peculiar twitching of his mouth when he spoke. Mrs. Crawton knew that he was annoyed.

"My nephew Mark coming here, and without my invitation! to be a spy upon us in our poverty, of course with the connivance of his uncle; trying to find anything that may tell against us: I did not think Daniel Crawton would have lent himself to such meanness."

Before her mother could answer, Margaret's voice struck in, as it often did on these occasions, when she rebelled against her father's irritating selfishness, and refused to let him hold his own in what she felt to be injustice.

"Father, I would scorn such suspicion as per-

fectly worthy. I know nothing of Uncle Daniel, except what I have heard from others; but whatever his faults may be, I feel sure that meanness is not one of them. He has nothing to do with Mark Danson's visit here. It is simply an arrangement between him and Hugh."

Her fine statuesque face had kindled into sudden life and colour. It could be seen that she was thoroughly in earnest.

Mr. Crawton did not answer, but gave his patient wife a look that seemed to say, "This is your training of your daughter." She offered him Hugh's note, but he pushed it from him, saying, "Never mind, my dear; whether I read it or not is of little consequence. I am nobody in these days, and perhaps it is as well that I should be put aside altogether. But about this visit of my nephew's; I think it was wrong for Hugh to encourage him to come here. He might have known that it would not be pleasant to me."

There was a pause. Mrs. Crawton made a sign to Margaret to remain silent. She busied herself about the sofa-cushions, the quiet tears welling into her eyes, and on her face the old look of dumb pain—the look that is born of a wounded spirit. But Robert Crawton, comfortably blind in his egotism, was unconscious that anything was wrong.

"My dear, you must remember that I shall be obliged to change this shabby coat and necktie, and we ought to have a bottle of wine. I should not like to feel humbled before George Danson's son."

"A bottle of wine," breathed Margaret, with a sigh, as she stitched hard at her wristband. "How does he think we can get the money to pay for it. Oh, mother, I can see that while father is in that frame of mind, you must bear your burden alone for any help that he will give you."

(To be continued.)

THE CHRISTIAN IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

BY THE REV. W. B. MACKENZIE, M.A., VICAR OF ST. JAMES'S, HOLLOWAY.

FEW directions are more needed to meet the duties of daily life than that which is laid down by St. Paul for the self-government of the Christians at Colosse: "To walk in wisdom towards them that are without" (iv. 5). It never was easy to let one's Christianity permeate through all the minute channels of everyday intercourse with the world. It is easy enough to spend part of each Sunday in public worship, and during the week to sail down the world's stream with contented self-satisfaction, thinking no more about the soul or its future destiny, till the next Sunday repeats its demand that the same religious exercises are to be performed over again. But this, which is Chris-

tianity enough for many, is not the Christianity of the New Testament. St. Paul appealed to the Ephesian elders that he had kept back nothing that was profitable, but had furnished them with all the rules and warnings requisite for daily conduct; and if, in these days of intense activity, ministers would deal with their people as one day all will wish they had been dealt with, then, besides teaching the salvation which the grace of God brings, they must warn those who hear it how to "live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present evil world."

The "saints and faithful brethren" to whom St. Paul gives this practical counsel, lived in the Phrygian city of Colosse, on the banks of the

Lycus, a tributary branch of the famed river Mæander. Herodotus tells us that Xerxes passed through this large and populous city when on his march to Greece. It does not appear that St. Paul himself had personally visited Colosse, but that he gained an intimate acquaintance with the Church there from Epaphras, Archippus, Philemon, Apphia, and other members who visited the apostle during his stay at Ephesus. His friend Timothy, too, who lived at Ephesus, no doubt kept him informed of the condition and prospects of the Christians at Colosse. In this way he ascertained that their conduct towards the non-Christian population of the place required counsel and direction, and probably instructing his friends how to regulate minuter details, he thinks it sufficient to urge this comprehensive direction, "to walk in wisdom towards them that are without."

It was natural to regard the Christian community there as a distinct brotherhood, separated from the rest of the population by their Christian privileges, duties, and hopes. Of this separation their baptism was the outward and permanent token. The Christian Church there, as elsewhere, was a society of Christ's faithful people, distinguished and called by divine grace from the outer world, faithfully to do his will, and finally to be received into his everlasting kingdom. Others, who neglect or resist his gracious invitations, live as the world lives, and acknowledge no obedience to Christ either in belief or practice, are here described as "them that are without;" they form the great outside world, while the believers in Jesus Christ are members and inmates of the inner circle of the household of faith.

At Colosse, those "who were without" were heathen idolaters, spending their lives in the revolting ignorance of present duties and future destinies, and habits of unblushing immorality, in which heathen people always and everywhere live and die. The present position of true Christians as to the world is somewhat different. Their separation from the outer world is as real as ever, though less marked. The civilised world now calls itself Christian, and, as to external profession, even associates itself with the Church. Visible distinction is therefore lost. Still, for all that, the true Church of Christ and the world must ever remain essentially distinct. The one is within the special circle of divine love and favour; the other is without. The one is sealed by the Spirit, and bears the marks of Christ's discipleship; the other bears no mark whatever of spiritual life. The one has been sought out by the Good Shepherd, and brought back to his fold; the other yet pursues his career of stubborn self-indulgence in the broad highway of sin. So that it is their inward life, and not merely their outward profession, which now distinguishes

the community of Christ's believing people from "those that are without." Before, "they were of the world, even as others;" now, Christ has "called them out of the world." No sooner do they surrender themselves—body, spirit, soul—to God, and begin to "live unto him," than they find the world strange and uncongenial. The world itself is just what it always was; but it is altered to them; everything around assumes a new aspect. They discover the evils abounding everywhere from which the Lord prayed that his people might be kept (John xvii). Now that "the eyes of their understanding are enlightened," they see the world everywhere to be the scene of temptations, hindrances to faith, and things that deaden, distract, and debase the soul—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life."

Among "them that are without" are men who possess great power and social influence—men gifted with the wealth, station, and talent which qualify them to occupy prominent positions on the busy stage of life—who, yet, living without God, resemble tropical plants, attractive in colouring, but which exhale a noxious vapour that poisons the surrounding atmosphere. Among "them that are without" are others who, with mischievous diligence, occupy themselves in multiplying agencies of evil, and aggravating the miseries of life; disguising vice to make it seem like virtue, and disfiguring virtue as if it were vice—in fact, every type of character—men of amiable and upright disposition, as well as the selfish and false; some who deserve much praise, and others from whom you instinctively recoil; some who possess every good, except that without which nothing is good, and others who seem to retain nothing but the darker traits of a depraved character. Among "them that are without," are others, again, whom to know is to esteem—men worthy of all honour in their social relationships, but hostile or invincibly indifferent to the claims of spiritual religion—men whose wisdom you would commend if there were not another world beyond this; but since there is, their heedless neglect of it depresses you with amazement and regret. Some are among them, too, whose religious sentiments are formed by models strangely different from the inspired Scriptures; whose ideas of sin and its forgiveness—of peace with God and reconciliation—of man's condition in this world and his prospects in another, are not the teaching of Christ and his apostles, but delusive lessons gathered from other masters. Among them, also, are many old people, whose hoary locks excite your veneration, while their persistent disregard of the approaching end of their days moves your pity; fathers and mothers whose misgovernment of their families is such that the interests of both worlds are endangered; and young persons who

waste their vigour, both of mind and body, in the pursuit of vain and flippant things, or the indulgence in graver sin. Such constitute a sample of the vast and varied community which the apostle appropriately designates as "them that are without."

In the midst of this accumulation of scepticism and superstition, of vice and falsehood, of contempt, indifference, and denial of spiritual things, ever actively at work, we are appointed to spend large portions of our life—daily to face these foes of our peace—to see, hear, and come into close contact with persons and things that deaden our faith, wound the conscience, and sadden the heart. Go where we may these evils meet us everywhere. In youth or age, at school or at home, in the scenes of business or the intercourse of social life, we must associate with persons whose opinions and habits on the great questions of sin and salvation, the condition and destiny of the soul, of Christ and his redemption, are equally false and pernicious. Yet here we are to live—among people whom we try in vain to reclaim, among sorrows we cannot abate, and temptations against which it seems almost useless to raise the cry of warning. These are the elements with which we must daily struggle; here, among this strange variety of character, pursuit, and prospect, we are to render faithful obedience to Christ, to do and suffer his will, "walking even as he walked," and thus to fulfil the mysterious purpose for which he keeps us yet among the people of the world.

To this condition of things in the world around us, St. Paul applies his important direction, to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without;" wisely, both as to them and as to ourselves; as to the great duties of this life, and the responsibilities of the life to come. It is too obvious to be denied that many fail to walk wisely; and when we think of Lot pitching his tent "towards Sodom," and then residing with his family within its polluted walls,—of the domestic disasters which befell Jacob by unwise associations among the inhabitants of Shechem,—of the contamination of the sons of Eli by the vicious habits of that corrupt age,—when we think of the conduct of David's three sons, Absalom, Adonijah, and Amnon, and his piteous lamentation over the death of one,—Solomon, too, yielding to the pernicious indulgences which ever beset the great and wealthy,—Hezekiah ostentatiously displaying his wealth to the ambassadors from Babylon, and Jehoshaphat joining in forbidden alliance with God's enemies,—and when, moreover, we see the inconsistent demeanour of so many professing Christians—their unlovely examples, the opportunities they neglect or fail adequately to employ, besides other faults and failings which stain the fair aspect of a Christian profession, and create or confirm the

prejudices of ungodly men,—observing instances of failure obvious and significant like these, we are reminded that it is urgently needful to press the admonition upon all who "profess and call themselves Christians," to give no offence in anything, but to strive to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without."

Still, no Christian who has resolved conscientiously to conduct himself wisely towards the outer world, ever found it an easy task. Some failures arise from themselves, their manifest defects, and their not possessing the requisite discernment or fidelity, not understanding the times and what they ought to do, or lacking the grace and strength faithfully to fulfil the same; while others fail from the unreasonableness with which their best intentions are frustrated. A vast amount of sincere resolution to meet the demands of outer life, is constantly, from one cause or other, brought to nothing. Not that we can always form an accurate estimate of results. What we think to be a failure, is often only success deferred. Our conduct towards others may be wise in itself, but being unwisely administered, creates an unfavourable impression. These transient misapprehensions, however, generally give way, and what in the main was done wisely will seldom be altogether lost. These practical counsels may be set up as finger-posts, directing us how to "walk in wisdom to them that are without."

Be vigilantly on your guard against the contagion of evil. In his sixth chapter of Ephesians, St. Paul describes the Christian clad in his complete armour, that he may be able to stand in the evil day. But, except the sword, his armour is defensive, to protect himself from danger. Self-preservation is the Christian's first law. "Keep them from the evil," our Lord prayed. Knowing that association with the outer world is the great inlet for mischief, Moses urged the strongest warnings on the Israelites when they took possession of Canaan—"Thou shalt not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land. When they go to sacrifice to their gods, and one call thee, thou shalt not eat of his sacrifices." And St. Paul charged Timothy, in his intercourse with "other men," not to be "partaker of their sins." But if, neglecting this precept, you show any indulgent leaning towards other men's errors in doctrine or practice; if you enter their places of resort, and add the sanction of your presence; if, like Saul at St. Stephen's martyrdom, you sympathise with their doings, and take even any slight part in them, or convey to others the impression that you see but little in them to censure; or if, when it was your obvious duty to express some disapprobation, you let it pass without delivering any sentiment of disapproval—in cases of this kind it may be fairly

alleged against you that you have not "walked in wisdom towards them that are without;" and there is some probability, too, that you have not escaped their pollution, and have even made yourself partaker of other men's sins.

To "walk in wisdom towards them that are without," it is an important precaution to exercise due reserve towards strangers and persons as yet imperfectly known. This want of caution in social intercourse is a frequent source of danger in early life. Few persons can review their past years without recalling to mind with intense regret the premature and ill-advised confidence to which they admitted some agreeable but treacherous companion. There is a passage of immense value, rich with instructive counsel, at the close of St. John's second chapter. The evangelist had just described the mixed condition of society—the good and bad, the hopeful and hopeless, that abound in all ages, as they then occurred to the Lord on his first public visit to Jerusalem. Some were profaning the temple for gain; some clamorously demanding a proof of his Messiahship; some professed their belief in him falsely; some were sincere but feeble disciples. But the evangelist records how wisely the Lord walked towards these various characters. "Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, because he knew what was in man." In our intercourse with men we lie under this immense disadvantage—that we know them but imperfectly. We often mistake their characters. Thinking them to be sincere and truthful, we admit them to our confidence, and make important communications without waiting until their real principles had more fully developed themselves. Our Lord understood these people perfectly at the first glance, and saw that they had no genuine sympathy with him, and were not to be relied upon; that on the first critical emergency their hollow fidelity would give way, and therefore "Jesus did not commit himself to them."

This spirit of wise reserve we must cultivate, if we would "walk wisely towards them that are without." We find frequently that in our intercourse with others we have confided in them too hastily. We have been too ready to welcome all comers, trust flattering smiles, and listen to men's smooth words; but sooner or later bitter disappointment teaches wiser counsels. Solomon says, "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." Referring to this wise conduct towards the outer world, some one lays down this maxim: "There are many times when nothing is to be said; sometimes we may prudently say something; but very seldom, and to very few, will a wise man open his

mind and say everything." There is much practical caution in an Italian proverb: "If a man deceive me once, it is his fault; but if he deceive me the second time, it is my own." This cautious reserve, which wisely guards us against the evils of imposture, is apt to degenerate into that hard and indiscriminate suspicion, distrusting every one, which regulates the dealings of the world. The Christian is cautious, too; but the one inclines a man to think the worst of a stranger, while the other disposes him to hope the best; the one bids him, like the priest and the Levite, shut up all compassion, and pass by on the other side; the other will "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and yet keep himself unspotted from the world."

But the wisest way to conduct ourselves towards the outer world, is to make it our daily business somehow or other to do them good. What an example did the Lord give! Call to mind his conversation with the Samaritan woman; his charge to the twelve, when he sent them to preach and to heal; and also to the seventy; his testimony about the Baptist; his reproof of the disciples for their rebuking some rival teacher; his conversations with Nicodemus, and the young ruler, and Zaccheus; his counsel to one who asked about the number of the saved; his replies to the Herodians about the tribute money, and the Sadducees about the future relationships of marriage. With what amazing wisdom did he ever behave among various and often hostile men, yet ever aiming to do them good!

It requires much wisdom and tact to carry this out. The great qualification for successfully attempting to benefit worldly persons by our social intercourse is the recommendation of a blameless example. It requires time to win the confidence of others. The world is slow to appreciate character. Every man has to outlive a season of distrust; but patient continuance in well-doing will accomplish it. Be wise, then, in the details of personal conduct. Avoid mistakes. Do not commit yourself to matters of questionable policy. Any grave failure will put back the hands on the dial, and you must travel over the same space again to a great disadvantage. Then as you feel, through God's blessing on your consistent career, that you are gaining influence with "them that are without," use that important talent well and wisely. You can then adopt measures for their good on which no one else may venture. Whether by letters, or counsel, or whatever way seems best, you have a measure of access to their best feelings which no one else possesses, and was granted by slow concessions even to you. We can all remember times in our past history when we received such help, from the wise and well-timed counsel of others, as proved incalculably advan-



(Drawn by H. WOODS.)

"So, gentle mother, on thy breast
Soft nestling lies the sweet white flower."— p. 506.

tageous ever after; times when a few considerate words of instruction or caution were dropped as on good ground into our hearts, and yielded a rich and abiding produce of good. "A word spoken in season, how good is it!"

But it must be added that many who are yet living in the avowed disregard of all religious duty, ascribe—though perhaps falsely—their unhappy condition to the unwise conduct of some one whose type of religious profession was defective, distorted, or in some way unattractive. It is of the utmost importance in moulding the character of young people, that they shall see the Christianity you want them to possess fairly illustrated in your example. This is the especial obligation of parents. It is difficult enough, under any circumstances, to prevail on young persons to cross the boundary from the world to the church, and surrender themselves in early life to the service of their Divine Master; but the duty rests chiefly on their parents. Teach them; pray with

them; advise them; give them the advantage of your experience; guard them against evils towards which you see them betraying incipient tendencies; cherish with loving anxiety their first impressions of good; but, above all, walk wisely towards them yourself. Your own conduct tells immensely more on them than all besides; and when you are gone, and they stand in tears and sorrow around your grave, the recollections of your blameless demeanour, your discreet treatment in moments of critical difficulty, your persuasive influence; the memory of things you did not, which if you had would have done them harm; and the vivid recollection of things you *did*, things done well, and wisely, and lovingly, and for their good—oh! it is the recollection of what you were once to them, and the grateful consciousness of what they are grown to be through you, that will consecrate your image in their heart, and make them long, and pray, and strive to walk towards others as wisely as you walked towards them.

WHITE FLOWERS.

A FLOWER lay hidden on my heart,
What time I strove against the storm;
A paly star, whose love-rays dart
Pure, gentle thoughts and warm.

The rude December raved and rushed,
And scarce I stood against its force;
My white flower nestled there uncrushed,
And I held on my course.

Uphill, alone, we gained at last,
My flower and I, the mansion warm;

There we forgot the struggle past,
Nor near us came the storm.

So, gentle mother, on thy breast
Soft nestling lies the sweet white flower;
The living soul whom God hath blest
With love's immortal dower.

Strive on—but thou art not alone—
Through summer shine and winter storm;
Christ give to him and thee a throne,
In His mansion bright and warm!

A. B.

WITNESSES FROM THE DEAD.

EGYPT.

THE past is explored, in these days in which "many run to and fro," with increasing energy and success. Fresh and cumulative evidences of the historic accuracy of the Bible are daily brought to light; and not only are the cobwebs of latitudinarian spiders thereby dispersed, but the least enlightened of our population are enabled to give a reason for the faith and hope that are dear to them. The graves of long-buried empires are found rich in instructive material, and replete with precious remains.

Egypt, chief among ancient realms, has risen from her grave, and, holding her no longer illegible hieroglyphic papyrus in her right hand, she contributes her testimony unintentionally to

the accuracy and truth of the books of Moses and our earliest Biblical history.

It appears that, long prior to the Christian era, the Egyptians were in the habit of recording in granite and limestone, on sarcophagi and mummy-cases, the names, and exploits, and benefactions of their Pharaohs, statesmen, and heroes. These inscriptions, in all their varieties of colour and gilding, have retained in innumerable instances quite the freshness of the year in which they were cut in the stone or gilded and coloured, owing to the extreme dryness of the climate. For many centuries these inscriptions defied the attempts of the learned to decipher and interpret their meaning; but what the world would call a lucky incident yielded up the long-hidden secret. A French officer, in 1799, found the Rosetta stone, on which was engraven a tri-lingual inscription,

consisting, first, of the heretofore impenetrable hieroglyphic writing; secondly, of the enchorial or demotic writing; and, thirdly, of what appeared to be a Greek translation. It was justly surmised that the Greek rendered into its language the hieratic and the enchorial characters. The labours of young Champollion and others who laboriously compared these writings, were crowned with success. The translation of the tri-lingual inscription was found to be as follows:—"To set up the statue of Ptolemy, the King, ever living, eternal, beloved of Phtha, the apparent God, the best Lord."

The stone thus providentially discovered at Rosetta, and afterwards deciphered, may now be seen in the British Museum. Much additional light has been cast on these inscriptions, as may be ascertained by referring to De Sacy, Rosellini, Osborne, Lepsius, and others.

When the investigations suggested by this discovery were in their early stage, foolish fears were entertained, by some weak-minded Christians, that the results would be damaging to the Bible and to Christianity. These fears were greatly excited by the discovery, on Napoleon's expedition into Egypt, of two zodiacs, at Dendera, painted on the ceiling of the portico of a temple. Several writers who examined these planispheres, insisted they were constructed at least 7,000 years before the birth of our Lord, and were therefore disproofs of the historic truth of the Mosaic records. But Mr. Banks, in a letter to Mr. Baillie, expressed his conviction that they were not older than the reign of Adrian or Antoninus Pius. He was not, however, believed by triumphant scepticism; but his reasons were by no means weak. He observed that really ancient columns had invariably fluted shafts, crowned by a simple bell, while the columns of Dendera and Esneh were enriched with elaborate sculptures of fruit and foliage. At length an inscription was discovered on the pronaos of Esneh, in which it was stated that two Egyptians caused the paintings to be executed in the tenth year of Antoninus Pius—that is, 147 years after the birth of Christ; while another inscription on the portico of the temple of Dendera intimates it was dedicated to the safety of Tiberius Cæsar. Champollion also discovered on the circular planisphere of Dendera, in hieratic characters, the word "autocratos" (*αυτοκρατορ*), which was Nero's Egyptian title. These zodiacs were therefore entirely astrological, and in no sense astronomical. Why, it may be asked, refer to them? It is in order to offer a suggestion of caution to scientific inquirers, and of patient waiting to all. No progress has yet been made in scientific researches that can warrant the violent and hasty inductions which certain rash spirits have made. When we have

all the facts and phenomena clearly before us, it will be time to draw inferences.

In these depositions of "witnesses from the dead," on the subject and history of Egypt, we find adduced a succession of names which prove that Egypt—and independently of Moses—testifies to the existence of names and the moral significance of men they cannot have read of in Genesis, because they were known and inscribed on the monuments before Genesis was written. The name of Egypt found on the monuments is Mizraim, the name of one of the sons of Ham; and this name is still retained in the East. The names of the gods of Egypt are those of the historic persons recorded in Genesis, long after deified in Egypt. Thus the god of Heliopolis is Athon (*i.e.*, Adam), and that of his wife is Evehor (*i.e.*, Eve). The god of the Nile, and of the rise and fall of its waters, is Noah, and the god of Memphis is Phut, who was a son of Ham. On the monuments we find Mizraim become Osyris, and Ham, Ammon. The principle of evil is called Sethor, obviously Satan. Thus the monuments of Egypt, like tombstones, testify to the historic existence and moral character of persons who, long subsequent to their testimony, and without any acquaintance with it, are recorded and described by Moses in their true characters. It would also seem, from distinctive epithets given to Egyptian gods on the monuments, that fragments of truths preached in Eden had drifted down the currents of time, and secured a place in Egyptian mythology. Thus, Osyris is called "the Manifestor of Grace," "the Revealer of Truth," "the Opener of Good," "full of grace and truth."

Noah was acquainted with the promise, "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head," and also the prophecy of Shiloh. Abraham, also, "saw Christ's day." These attributes given to Mizraim, or Osyris, look therefore like fragments of sunshine broken by refraction, but sunshine still; and, so far, they attest a wide-spread prevalence in national traditions of those truths, more or less shattered, which God preached to his own 2,000 years before Egypt was in being.

We proceed to show how clearly the inscriptions on the limestone and the granite cast illustrative light on incidents recorded in Genesis, which incidents have created difficulties otherwise not easily dispersed. It has been asked, How could Abraham have been so cordially welcomed to the court of Pharaoh, seeing the sacred Scripture asserts, "Shepherds are an abomination to the Egyptians?" The solution is now easy. The monuments show that two coterminous dynasties reigned in Egypt in the time of Abraham, one in the Lower and the other in the Upper Egypt. The Pharaoh of the Lower Egypt formed an alliance

with the people of Canaan, and expelled the Upper dynasty; but it is the dynasty of Upper Egypt that records this fact, and which calls the inhabitants of Lower Egypt "foreigners," and their Pharaohs "Shepherd kings." It was at the court of *Lower Egypt* that Abraham was welcomed.

We read in Scripture that Pharaoh gave Abraham "men slaves and women slaves." The monuments show that slavery existed at that time, for it is not uncommon to find, on the most ancient monuments, the picture of a mistress beating her women slaves with a whip.

Sarah is described in the Mosaic record as "very fair." Now Nubians, and Ethiopians, and, though less so, Egyptians, were dark; the fair complexion of Sarah is at once explained by the fact that she was a native of Mesopotamia, the natives of which were fair. We read that "the princes of Pharaoh saw Sarah." It has been objected to this that in Eastern countries women were, and always are, veiled. But it is forgotten that Egypt was an exception, as seen on the monuments. Sarah, with good sense, conformed, in this matter, to the custom of the country in which she sojourned for a season.

The history of Joseph, singularly touching in itself, receives much and varied illustration from the monuments. We read, in the words of Moses, that the persons to whom Joseph was sold were traders, "with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt." Nothing can be more in accord with the conditions of the time and place, for these articles were largely imported into Egypt, being used in quantities in embalming their dead.

Joseph, we read, was sold for "twenty pieces of silver." On the monuments silver invariably takes precedence of gold, its whiteness and purity making it popular among the Egyptians.

These merchants, judging from their purchase of Joseph, must have traded in slaves. Of this the monuments yield abundant proof. A picture on the tomb of Osartasen I., represents the delivery of thirty-seven prisoners, makers of stibium, purchased by the excavator of the tomb from a petty king of the Jebusites. The inscription is, "The delivery of the stibium-makers, which the great Chief of the Jebusites brought with thirty-seven captives." In Benihasan, there is a picture of Canaanite and Ethiopian slaves wrestling. At Bersheh a courtier is represented dragging a colossus from the quarry with gangs of slaves.

The story of Joseph implies the existence of this trade, and the inscriptions on the monuments prove its existence at that time.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "If thou knowest any men of fitness, set them over my cattle." We find the evidence of the appointment of such on the monuments. On one we read, "Superinten-

dent of the King's Cattle," and on another, "Royal Scribe of the Bodies of the Cattle."

Among the cattle brought to Joseph were horses; among Abraham's cattle horses are not mentioned. We find no reference to horses on monuments inscribed in the days of Abraham, but frequent mention of horses on those subsequent to the history of Joseph.

Joseph's "coat of many colours" has perplexed some readers of his story; but seen in the light of cotemporary monuments, there is nothing extraordinary about it. Cloths of various colours, resembling Highland clan tartans, were worn at that time by Egyptians. A tomb of Pihrai, a military officer of Osartasen I., still exists, on which is sculptured a train of foreigners, one of whom wears a tunic of many colours, and over whom is written, in the hieratic or hieroglyphic character, "The Chief of the Jebusites." These were evidently Jews, from the well-known characteristic countenance, and by their wearing beards. They were not prisoners, as indicated by the absence of chains. In all likelihood they were the family of Jacob. It was during the reign of Aphophis, a Shepherd king of the eighteenth dynasty, that Joseph came into Egypt. This king was his patron. Allusive to some incident in Joseph's history, he was named, it would appear, in the Egyptian language, Zaphnath-paaneah. The first word meaning "he who receives;" "Nath," the goddess of wisdom, corresponding to his Hebrew character, "None so wise as thou;" and the second word means, "One who flies from adultery."

Joseph was purchased by Potiphar, and the priest whose daughter he married was Potipherah, priest of On, that is, of the sun, and his city was Heliopolis, the City of the Sun. The inhabitants of Egypt were generally named after the local gods. All natives of Memphis had names into which *Phtha* entered, and all Thebans had *Amon*. The scene of Joseph's imprisonment was On, or Memphis, hence the names of those with whom he became associated.

Heliopolis and its priests were celebrated for their learning, and, according to Herodotus, its priests were the "most learned in the world." There is, therefore, no doubt that Pharaoh's object in giving a wife to Joseph who was a daughter of a priest, was to enhance the dignity and prestige of his dynasty, in connection with which Joseph held so prominent an office.

It is said, in Genesis, Pharaoh gave Joseph a ring. In the East a ring was a seal, and the seal still takes the place of our signature. It was given on institution into office. Pharaoh, it is also stated, arrayed Joseph in "vestments of linen." This was an official distinction. On a tomb at Thebes we find the full picture of investing

an officer of rank; one puts on a necklace, and another a white robe. These discoveries illustrate and vindicate the minute accuracy of Scripture.

We read that the baker dreamed that he carried his basket on his head. Herodotus, who lived upwards of 400 years before the birth of Christ, thus writes of the Egyptians: "Men carry burdens on their heads, and the women on their shoulders;" and the monuments amply confirm this account.

Joseph, we are told in Scripture, on approaching Pharaoh, "shaved off his beard." This is explained and vindicated by the fact that, while the Jews and most Oriental nations wore beards, the Egyptians invariably shaved off the beard. Among the Egyptians, a man wearing a beard was regarded as a slovenly person. Joseph conformed, as did Sarah by throwing off her veil, to the usages and customs of the country—"becoming all things to all" in things indifferent.

It is a well-known fact that Eastern races recline at their meals; but Joseph, it is stated in the sacred narrative, sat at his. Here again the sacred narrative indicates its historic truth and minute accuracy. The Egyptians were exceptions among Eastern nations in this respect; for, as the monuments show, they sat at meals. In the banquetting-hall, we read, Joseph sat by himself, and his brethren by themselves, and the Egyptians separate from both; "for the Egyptians would not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians." This separation is distinctly indicated on the monuments. Generally, two sat at a table; but in every case, not only the precedence of rank, but distinction of nationality, is clearly marked.

During the elevation of Joseph and the seven years of famine, there occurred a great rise of the Nile, in Egypt, and a too high or too low rise was equally disastrous. Hence famine or plenty was universal in Egypt, because, according to the level, too high or too low, to which the Nile rose, was not partial, but universal famine or abundance. The highest rise of the Nile was always indicated at Senné by a mark cut in the granite; one of these marks is twenty-six feet eight inches higher than the highest level to which the Nile rises in the greatest floods. This unprecedented rise occurred during the reign of Sukopthis II., who was cotemporary with Aphophis, under whom Joseph served. During the preceding seven years of plenty, Joseph collected the corn and stored it in granaries. On a tomb at Eilethya is represented a man taking an account of the number of bushels, which another man, acting under him, measures; the inscription over him is, "The Registrar of Bushels." On the monuments we find many pictures of vast storehouses, into which men are seen gathering corn, or, as described in the sacred narrative, "Joseph gathered corn, as

the sand of the sea, very much, until he left off numbering." We read in Genesis these words of Joseph, "Behold, I have bought the land for Pharaoh. Of the increase ye shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own." This was a stringent income-tax; it amounted to twenty per cent. Of the results of this policy, Bunsen thus writes: "The revolution in the ownership of land, by which the freehold of all Egypt, except the temple estates, became subject to a rent, is a great historical fact. The monuments clearly show that after Joseph's time the authority and grandeur of the king was greatly increased." "Only," adds Moses, "the land of the priests bought he not." The priests being thus exempt from income-tax, grew rapidly in prosperity, and grandeur, and power, as the monuments prove.

Osborne remarks, "The fruits of the changes effected by the policy of Joseph are abundantly deciphered in the monumental history of the eighteenth dynasty." Tombs of porphyry and granite, covered with splendid representations of the Pharaohs, their officers, and chariots, and victories, and festivals, indicate great wealth, far beyond anything previously possessed by Egypt, as the fruits of Joseph's policy.

We might reasonably expect that so successful and eminent a prime minister would not want for a monument, or tomb, to his memory after death. Much and patient research has been expended in quest of it, and at length one has been found, which in all probability is the place where his bones lay for 150 years, till carried into Canaan. At Sacchara, over against Memphis, are the ruins of a tomb of a prince of Egypt, on which is sculptured the name "Joseph." It stands near the largest pyramid of a group supposed to have been built for Pharaoh Aphophis, under whom Joseph served. On the tomb on which we find the name of Joseph, we also find the word "Abrecht," which occurs in Genesis xli. 4, and is rendered, "Bow the knee," a very suggestive coincidence. We also find the following inscriptions: "Director of the Granaries of Egypt," "Director of the full and empty Channels of Irrigation," and *Bitsuph*—"He came to save." In this tomb, in which the body of Joseph lay embalmed till the exode, we have a crowning proof of the historic character, acts, and greatness of Joseph; the ancient ruins also rising from the dead, and silently, yet eloquently, saying, "Thy word, O God, is truth."

We come down to the Pharaoh that knew not Joseph. He was, beyond doubt, Pharaoh Ramases. His name occurs on almost every monument, or ruin, in the Delta, or Goshen. The monuments erected by this Pharaoh exceed those of every preceding Pharaoh, in number, vastness, and splendour. He erected innumerable colossi,

andriantes, sphinxes, and statues. Herodotus writes that he made enormous additions to the temple of Ptha, in Memphis, and built a chain of fortifications 160 miles in length, besides other engineering works of unrivalled magnificence. It is obvious, from the monuments, that he employed vast gangs of slaves in creating these stupendous works. Who were these slaves?

The priests told Diodorus Siculus that not a single Egyptian was employed in these works. The slaves were not natives of Egypt. These slaves were not prisoners taken in war; for of this the monuments are entire disproof. There is a perfect picture of them on a monument found at Thebes. Rosellini, who found it, writes, "Of these labourers, some are employed in transporting the clay in vessels, some in intermingling with it straw, others are taking the bricks out of the forms and placing them in rows, others with a piece of wood on their backs and ropes on each side carry away the bricks already dried." Their dissimilarity to the Egyptians appears at the first view; the complexion, physiognomy, and beard do not permit us to be mistaken in supposing them Hebrews.

Most of the hieratic papyri were written about the time of the exode. On one of these the scribe writes: "I have obeyed the command which my

master gave me, to provide subsistence for the soldiers, and also for the Hebrews, who carry stones for the great Bekhen"—i.e., treasure-house of King Ramases. The sacred record says these gangs of slaves were Hebrews.

On the use of straw, Rosellini observes, "The bricks which are now found in Egypt, belonging to this period, always have straw mingled with them." Prokesch, quoted by Hengstenberg, says, "The bricks of the first pyramid at Dashoor are of fine clay from the Nile, mingled with chopped straw. This intermixture gives the bricks astonishing durability." At no other period previous to this were the Jews employed in brickmaking. Prior to this reign the Jews were very popular with the successive dynasties; and therefore we are shut up to the conclusion, that the picture discovered by Rosellini, at Thebes, is a picture of Jews in the brick-kiln, during the reign of Pharaoh Ramases, near the time of the exode. Hengstenberg, Rosellini, and Osborne are all of this mind.

So far as we have gone, the monuments, as inscribed by Egypt, testify to the truth—the minute truthfulness—of the inspired narrative. The stone opens its lips and cries from the tomb; and the sarcophagus and the monument attest Moses was God's ancient servant, and his writing the inspiration of the Spirit of God. J. C.

ZINA'S TROUBLES.



WHEN will my brothers be home from school, mamma?"

"I expect them to arrive on Monday evening, dear."

"I do so hope I shall be better by that time, and able to enjoy their company. I have been so long looking forward to their return, it would be very sad if I were obliged to lie here all through their vacation; and how stupid they would think me!"

"Don't fret about that, Zina, I am sure your brothers will be very sorry to find you ill, but they will know you cannot help it, and papa and I are in great hopes that their return will cheer and enliven you."

Zina Ellmore had enjoyed but few of the pleasures of childhood, owing to the extreme delicacy of her health; while her brothers and young companions played she used to sit listlessly looking on, and often long wearily for the hour when she might return to the house; and so her earliest years passed away. Sometimes, indeed, she would appear stronger for a short period, then sink again into the same state of languor and weakness. Just before this story commences Zina had been suffering from a fit of illness, longer and more depressing than any which she had

yet endured, and was beginning to regain a little strength when her brothers returned from school. Now it happened that during the boys' vacations for the last few years their sister had been better than usual, and able to talk cheerfully, and enter a little into their amusements, so that they did not understand how ill she was, or fully realise all the months of suffering she underwent during their absence.

At length the wished-for Monday arrived; but, alas! Zina was not better. She lay on the sofa weak and languid, yet in a state of strong excitement. As the hour drew near she asked her father to wheel her towards the window, that she might be the first to see their approach, and there she watched anxiously with flushed cheeks and beating heart until the forms of three boys came into view at a turn of the avenue.

"Oh, papa—mamma, they are coming!" she exclaimed; then with a sigh she added, "and I cannot go to meet them."

"No, dear, lie still, and they shall come in to you immediately."

Mr. and Mrs. Ellmore went to the door to receive their sons, and soon they all entered the drawing-room together.

"What's the matter, Zina?" said John, the eldest

brother, "not ill again, I hope; why, I thought you'd be quite well and jolly, in honour of us."

"Oh, John, I can't!" she replied, as the tears gathered in her eyes; then repressing them with a strong effort, she added, "but, indeed, I am very glad to see you."

"You'll be all right soon, little one," said George, the youngest, looking at her tenderly as he stooped over the sofa, "won't you? We'll make you better; oh! you cannot think all the school news I have to tell you."

Zina smiled as she replied, "I shall like so much to hear it, George."

Philip said not a word after the first salutations were over, but looked at her with a sarcastic smile, which to her sensitive mind expressed, "How provoking to find her lying there, when we wanted to have some fun during the holidays! Now nothing will be thought of but her, and I'm sure she's not a bit ill, but could get up and go about if she liked."

Poor Zina! this thought haunted her, and she said to herself, "I know it is very hard upon him, and I'll do my best to rouse up, and let him have all the pleasure I can." Meanwhile the boys seated themselves round the tea-table, talked, laughed, and were merry, while their sister lay silently on the sofa brooding over that unkind look.

For the next few days the boys were out most of their time, engaged in their respective amusements, but George always found leisure to sit by his sister, and hear all she had to say, as well as to relate to her anything he thought likely to prove interesting.

Zina had a small phaeton which Mr. Ellmore had got expressly for her, as she was seldom strong enough to take walking exercise; the pony which drew it was a great pet, and had been given by a kind friend to all the children some years ago. During vacation the boys used to ride in turn, and Zina tried not to allow her drives to interfere with their holiday pleasures. She was beginning to feel a little stronger, and was able to go about the garden and pleasure-grounds, when an expedition was planned, for all the party to join some friends and spend the day on a beautiful part of the coast, where there were curious caves and a bold shelving shore. Zina was particularly fond of visiting this place, but, alas! her strength was not sufficient for so fatiguing a day, and her mother promised to remain with her while the others were absent. On the evening before the day arranged for the intended expedition, George found Zina walking slowly and sadly round the garden, and joining her, said, "John and I have been thinking that there is nothing to prevent your coming with us to-morrow, for we should not half enjoy it without you."

"Oh, George, dear! I should like well to go, but I feel I am not able; you know there is a great distance to walk after we leave the carriage."

"Yes, but your own little phaeton and Chessy could go by the narrow road, along the rough strand to the very foot of the cliffs, though the large carriage and horses could not, and I would go with you and drive; then, you could sit on the rocks to rest whenever you liked, and come home the same way in the evening. I think the sea-air and the little variety would do you good, for you have not had a drive for a long time."

"Because I wished to leave Chessy for you boys in the holidays, and I'm sure some one would like to ride him to-morrow."

"Oh! never mind that, there are plenty of seats in the carriage to bring us all."

"Well, I should like to go very much," she replied, "and I really think I could manage it."

Just then John and Philip came in sight, and George ran off to them, and said, "I have been making a beautiful plan, by which Zina can come with us to-morrow."

"What is it?" asked John.

"By driving Chessy in her own little carriage she can go along the strand to the very foot of the cliffs, and have scarcely any walking."

"Driving Chessy, indeed!" exclaimed Philip; "she'll do no such thing; it's my turn to ride him to-morrow. You're very good, George, to offer what does not belong to you; if it was your own turn you would not be so generous."

George flushed with anger, but after a moment replied, quietly, "I did not remember it was your day to ride, Phil, and of course you can insist on your right if you please; all I can say is, that if it were my turn I should at once give it up to poor Zina, she suffers so much, and has so few pleasures."

"Well, I don't want to hear a sermon from you; I know what's right and what's wrong quite as well as you, and I'll do as I like without leave from my younger brother. And mind," he called out, as George was turning away, "I'll ride to-morrow."

George walked slowly towards the house, thinking how he should tell Zina that she could not be of the party. He found her at the hall door, her face bright with the anticipation of next day's pleasure. Sitting down beside her, and taking her hand in his, he said, "Zina, I'm so sorry, but it's Phil's turn to ride to-morrow, and he won't give up the pony."

* * * * *

Next day turned out bright and pleasant, and the party set off for the sea-cliffs, Philip riding after the carriage on Chessy. Zina felt particularly depressed, and lay on her sofa all day, languidly gazing at the sunshine outside; she spoke little, but once or twice observed, "What a beautiful day they have for their expedition, and how lovely the sea must look." Her mother read an amusing book aloud to her, and after some time she fell into a restless sleep, from which she was roused by the sound of carriage-wheels announcing the return of the party.

"Has Philip not arrived yet?" asked his father, as he entered the room.

"No," replied Mrs. Ellmore, "did he not ride after the carriage?"

"He started from the cliffs before us, and we did not pass him on the road; I cannot imagine what has become of him."

"He'll be in presently, I'm sure," said John. "Let us have tea, for we're all very hungry; I dare say he'll be here before it's over."

Accordingly they gathered round the table for their evening meal, but Philip did not appear, although they sat a long time over it in hopes of his arrival. The tea-things were removed, after laying aside a portion for him; hours passed by, bed-time came, but he had not returned. His parents were now seriously unhappy, and determined to wait up, but recommended the young people to go to bed. Zina took her mother's advice and retired to her room, but not to rest; an undefined feeling, a foreboding of evil, took possession of her mind, and she could not sleep. She heard the clock strike every hour till the day dawned, and still Philip had not returned; surely some accident must have befallen him, and she might never see him again. Oh! how dreadful was the thought that he might have died with feelings of hatred in his heart towards her; poor Zina! how earnestly she prayed that God would avert so awful a calamity!

Meantime Mr. and Mrs. Ellmore had passed an anxious night, and when morning dawned the unhappy father determined to lose no time in going to seek for his son. Accordingly he rode in the direction of the sea-cliffs, searching the fields and lanes on every side as he went along. It was a lonely road, for at such an early hour the few peasants who lived in the neighbourhood were not yet stirring; still he proceeded until he came within sight of the place where they had spent the previous day, and there on the strand stood Chessy. The pony knew Mr. Ellmore at once, and came trotting towards him, and though the poor animal could not tell where his young master was, yet he looked sagaciously in the father's face, and slowly led the way to a spot at some distance where was a deep chasm lined with shelving rocks. Mr. Ellmore, bending over the edge, gazed with horror down this dark and frowning abyss, and thought he beheld a human form stretched on a broad ledge of rock which lay beneath.

"Philip!" he cried. There was no answer, but amidst the roar of the waves he could distinguish a faint moan. There was no time to be lost, so he hurried back to the nearest house, roused the inmates, and sent in all directions for assistance. As soon as ropes could be procured, they descended to the rock on which the boy's form lay, and found

that it was indeed Philip, and that he still lived, although he had sustained severe injuries. His gun was found beside him, broken in two pieces by the violence of the fall. Ropes were fastened round his body, and he was drawn up as gently as possible, then placed on a cart and conveyed home. A surgeon was immediately procured, and it was ascertained that one of his legs was shattered in a terrible manner, and great were his sufferings for many months, as he lay hovering between life and death. However, in the end, youth and a naturally strong constitution carried him through so far that he was considered out of danger; but the best surgical skill could not save him from being helpless for life.

This was the manner in which the sad accident occurred:—When Philip told his father he would ride home before the carriage started, the truth was, he wished to take a round of the coast in order to get a parting shot at a sea-gull. Accordingly, shouldering his gun, and leading Chessy by the rein, he walked towards the cliffs, and not seeing any birds within distance, mounted the pony, intending to go back and leave the gun in charge of one of his brothers before setting off for home; but when he had gone a little way, observing a bird hovering over head, without a moment's consideration, he raised the barrel and fired. Chessy, though usually a quiet animal, being startled by this loud and unexpected sound, at his very ear, made a sudden plunge and flung his rider off to some distance. The whole thing took place so quickly that Philip could make no effort to save himself, but, with the gun still tightly clutched in his hand, rolled down the steep chasm on the verge of which he was thrown, and had he not been caught by a ledge of rock in his descent, he must have fallen hundreds of feet into the roaring waves beneath. And there he lay, most of the time in a state of insensibility, until rescued by his father, as we have seen.

It was now his turn to recline all day on a sofa, to which he was carried each morning and back again to bed every evening, an object of pity to all. And through this life-long state of helplessness who watched by him unweariedly, and attended to all his wants and wishes?—who did her best to amuse and cheer his solitude?—who sympathised with his sufferings, and bore patiently with all his tempers and caprices? Zina! his only sister.

Years have passed away since; Zina is improved in health, she has outgrown the delicacy of her childhood, and would be able to participate in and enjoy the youthful amusements with which she is surrounded, but she devotes her whole life to the task of nursing and comforting her invalid brother, who has now learned to be cheerful under his affliction, and values beyond all other earthly blessings the affection of his sister.

R.